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ABSTRACT

These curriculum materials have been designed to help upper elementary students in England make a successful start at secondary school. These transition units consist of one unit involving 10 lessons at the end of Year 6 and a second unit of six lessons at the beginning of Year 7. The units use teaching objectives drawn from the primary and Key Stage 3 Frameworks for teaching literacy/English. Each Year 6 unit sets out to provide useful information about students' attainment in a manageable form by passing on information on students' strengths and weaknesses in certain aspects of the curriculum. The assessments and targets arising from the units can also be used to inform the teaching programs developed by local literacy summer schools. The materials are divided into the following sections: Introduction; Framework Objectives; Introduction to Year 6 Unit; Two-week Plan for Year 6; Year 6 Week 1-Detailed Lesson Plan of Days 3 and 4; Introduction to Year 7 Unit; Two-week Plan for Year 7; Year 7 Week 2-Detailed Lesson Plan of Days 4 and 5. Contains targeted text resources. (NKA)

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ED 472 410

# Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 English: Units of Work.

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# Introduction to the transition units

The move from Year 6 to Year 7 can be daunting for pupils. After a long summer break, they are working in a new environment. They may have few friends, as their peers come from many different schools. They have to get to know new teachers and a different organisation. Teaching approaches may not be the same.

Your school will already have some effective arrangements to help pupils to make a successful start at secondary school. For example, there may be a local project, such as use of QCA or other bridging units. If this is the case, you may prefer to continue using these materials rather than introduce the transition units.

There are two pairs of transition units, one for mathematics and one for literacy/English:

- *Calculation and problem solving:* one unit involving five lessons at the end of Year 6 and a second unit of five lessons at the beginning of Year 7
- *Authors and texts:* one unit involving ten lessons at the end of Year 6 and a second unit of six lessons at the beginning of Year 7.

These units use teaching objectives drawn from the primary and Key Stage 3 Frameworks for teaching literacy/English or mathematics. If you are using the National Literacy Strategy's Year 6 Planning Exemplification, or the National Numeracy Strategy's Year 6 Unit Plans, the Year 6 transition units will already form part of your work for the summer term. The Key Stage 3 Frameworks help to provide continuity in teaching approaches and progression in what is taught in mathematics and English.

The Statutory Transfer Form provides information about pupils' attainment in end of key stage assessments. Nevertheless, it is often difficult for Year 7 teachers to gauge the curricular strengths and weaknesses of pupils who are new to their schools. The transition unit is another means of providing secondary teachers with some common information about pupils from different primary schools. Each Year 6 unit sets out to provide useful information on pupils' attainment in a manageable form by passing on information on pupils' strengths and weaknesses in certain aspects of the curriculum. The assessments and targets arising from the units can also be used to inform the teaching programmes developed for local literacy and numeracy summer schools.

The transition units are intended to ensure that:

- pupils experience a lesson structure they are familiar with and understand
- there is a consistency in teaching approach that will help pupils to respond to new people in new surroundings
- pupils are able to build on their early successes and demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in the context of the work they did in Year 6
- teachers are better informed about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and can use the lessons to confirm their assessments and plan teaching programmes that meet the needs of their pupils
- there is greater continuity and progression and less repetition of work.

For the transition units to succeed, primary schools need to make sure that pupils' work from the Year 6 units is transferred to the appropriate secondary school. When it is not clear to which secondary school pupils will transfer, the pupils may keep their work themselves, to take it to their new schools.

This is the first year that the transition units have been used. The Strategy teams would welcome feedback via the LEA's literacy/English and numeracy/mathematics consultants on the extent to which the units have supported transition arrangements, and ways in which the units could be developed further.

# Transition units – *Authors and Texts* – Framework objectives

| | Year 6 | Year 7 |
|---|---|---|
| Text level Reading | 1. to describe and evaluate the style of an individual writer;<br>5. to compare and contrast the work of a single writer;<br>6. to look at connections and contrasts in the work of different writers;<br>8. to use a reading journal effectively to raise and refine personal responses to a text and prepare for discussion; | 6. adopt active reading approaches to engage with and make sense of texts, e.g. *visualising, predicting, empathising and relating to own experience*;<br>15. trace the ways in which a writer structures a text to prepare a reader for the ending, and comment on the effectiveness of the ending;<br>**17. read a range of recent fiction texts independently as the basis for developing critical reflection and personal response, e.g. *sharing views, keeping a reading journal*;** |
| Text level Writing | 9. to write summaries of books or parts of books, deciding on priorities relevant to purpose;<br>12. to compare texts in writing, drawing out:<br>▪ their different styles and preoccupations;<br>▪ their strengths and weaknesses;<br>▪ their different values and appeal to a reader; | 3. use writing to explore and develop ideas, e.g. *journals, brainstorming techniques and mental mapping activities*; |
| Sentence level | 2. to conduct detailed language investigations through interviews, research and reading, e.g. of proverbs, language change over time, dialect, study of headlines;<br>4. to secure control of complex sentences, understanding how clauses can be manipulated to achieve different effects; | **1. extend their use and control of complex sentences by:**<br>a. recognising and using subordinate clauses;<br>b. exploring the functions of subordinate clauses, e.g. *relative clauses such as 'which I bought' or adverbial clauses such as 'having finished his lunch'*;<br>c. deploying subordinate clauses in a variety of positions within the sentence; |
| Word level | 5. to invent words using known roots, prefixes and suffixes, e.g. *vacca + phobe = someone who has a fear of cows*;<br>6. to practise and extend vocabulary, e.g. through inventing word games such as puns, riddles, crosswords; | **1. Pupils should revise, consolidate and secure correct vowel choices, including: vowels with common alternative spellings, for example *ay*, *ai*, *a-e*; unstressed vowels; the influence of vowels on other letters, e.g. doubling consonants, softening c;** |
| Speaking and Listening | Speaking and Listening focus (devised for this unit).<br>▪ use exploratory talk to compare (observe similarities) and contrast (observe differences) in texts;<br>▪ explore relationships through work in role;<br>▪ contribute appropriately to discussion through reasoned and evaluative comments; | 2. recount a story, anecdote or experience, and consider how this differs from written narrative;<br>**6. listen for and recall the main points of a talk, reading or television programme, reflecting on what has been heard to ask searching questions, make comments or challenge the views expressed;** |
| | The National Literacy Strategy *Framework for Teaching* (1998) | The KS3 *Framework for Teaching English*, Years 7, 8 and 9 (2000)<br>(Key objectives are in **bold**) |

# Introduction to Year 6 unit

The transition units in English comprise two weeks' (10 days') work after the Key Stage 2 tests in Year 6 and two weeks' (six days') work at the beginning of Year 7. There are objectives, at text and sentence levels, common to both years. These involve using a reading journal to deepen understanding of text and, as a writer, increasing control of complex sentences.

## Summary of objectives

The main objective of this unit is to ensure that pupils can use a reading journal effectively to raise and refine personal responses to text and prepare for discussion. In the reading journal, the pupils will describe and evaluate the style of writers by summarising, comparing and contrasting elements across their novels and making connections to and comparisons with another writer/other writers. In composing journal entries, the pupils will use, as appropriate, complex sentences and appropriate technical vocabulary (metalanguage) when summarising, connecting and contrasting. They will also have the opportunity to investigate the language used in the novels.

## Outcomes

- reading journals – evidence of each pupil's competence in reflecting upon their reading and their competence in writing
- a class anthology for use by the school

## Resources

***Kensuke's Kingdom* and *The Suitcase Kid***

This Year 6 unit requires two novels by different authors which, between them, appeal to a wide readership and contain some similar thematic material. The two novels which are the basis of this planning exemplification are *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo and *The Suitcase Kid* by Jacqueline Wilson. Although both are written in the first person, the use of language in each of these novels is very different. The settings and plot bear no resemblance to one another but they share the theme of family relationships and conflict. Any two novels which meet these broad requirements can be substituted, one read before the start of the unit and the other during the fortnight of the unit.

The editions of the two books exemplified in this planning are listed below. All page numbers refer to these editions.

Michael Morpurgo *Kensuke's Kingdom* 2000 Mammoth ISBN 0 7497 3639 9
Jacqueline Wilson *The Suitcase Kid* 1993 Corgi Yearling ISBN 0 440 86311 2

**If teachers choose to use these books it is essential that they read *Kensuke's Kingdom* to the class before starting the unit and *The Suitcase Kid* on a daily basis throughout the unit.** In order to follow the suggested plan, it is necessary to have read up to page 72 by the first Thursday and to the end of the book by the following Wednesday. A suggested number of pages has been inserted into the plan on each day.

The planning includes resource material for use in analysis and as demonstration writing (Sample Texts 1–10 and Resource Sheets A–H). These materials serve to illustrate the intended teaching points and can be replaced with different examples.

**Sample Texts 1–7**

These are either journal entries for analysis by the teacher (or pupils) or journal entries for demonstration writing. They are annotated so that the teacher has the information when analysing a journal entry, knows what the pupils should have produced when they analyse an entry or for the teacher to articulate aloud when demo-writing.

**Resource Sheets A–C**

These contain detailed information for particular activities and are referenced in the week plan.

## Homework

There are suggestions for homework each day. Teachers will decide how often pupils will do homework related to English. The aim of these homework suggestions is to continue using a reading journal when reading a personal selection of books. None of the lessons depend upon the suggested homework.

## Guided reading

The class novel, *The Suitcase Kid*, could provide the detailed discussion for guided reading. However, teachers may prefer pupils to be reading other material.

Pupils often wish to continue reading books by authors they have encountered at school. Further books by Michael Morpurgo and Jacqueline Wilson include:

| **Jacqueline Wilson** | **Michael Morpurgo** |
|---|---|
| *Double Act* | *The Dancing Bear* |
| *Glubbslyme* | *The Butterfly Lion* |
| *The Story of Tracy Beaker* | *Twist of Gold* |
| *The Dare Game* | *Waiting for Anya* |
| *The Lottie Project* | *Out of the Ashes* |
| *Cat Mummy* | |

## Reading journals

At the end of the Year 6 unit, the pupils will have made a number of entries in their reading journals, particularly if they are encouraged to extend its use to their personal reading outside the Literacy Hour. This journal will serve as an indicator to their Year 7 English teacher (and others) of their capacity to respond to and reflect on text and their ability to write down their reflections.

## Ongoing spelling work

This unit does not include any of the routine spelling objectives. However, it would be advisable to continue ongoing spelling practice, e.g. investigations into the roots of words and the conventions of spelling, white board practice and dictation.

In the week plans which follow, the objectives which are addressed in each section of the lesson are referenced by number and initial for text, sentence and word, e.g. *T8*, *S4*, *W6*.

# Two-week plan for Year 6 – Week 1

| Year 6 | Week 1 | Shared text, sentence and word level work | Independent/guided work | Plenary | Class novel | Possible homework suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Introduction to reading journals | Use Ch3 of *Kensuke's Kingdom* to introduce idea of log/journal and the range of types of journal entry. Introduce the idea of using a reading journal (Resource Sheet A). Briefly show examples of entries from a reading journal (e.g. Sample Texts 1, 8, 9) to show how a reading journal can be used. *T8* | Pupils start their own reading journals by writing two or three comments they would like to make to Michael Morpurgo about any aspect of *Kensuke's Kingdom* and two questions they would like to ask him about it. *T1, T8* | Sample pupils' responses. Focus on and explore a wide range of reactions/ responses. *T1, T8* | Begin reading *The Suitcase Kid* to class. | Pupils begin to read own chosen texts; they record initial comments and questions. *T1* |
| Day 2 | Analysing journal entries which compare texts | Reread the opening paragraph of *Kensuke's Kingdom*; briefly discuss its effectiveness as an opening. Read and discuss the opening of *The Butterfly Lion* (Resource Sheet B). Discuss and analyse journal entry (Sample Text 1) which compares the two openings. Note the occasional use of complex sentences to make the comparisons and the use of specific terminology (metalanguage). *T1, T5, S4, W6* | Pupils read the opening of *The Dancing Bear* (Resource Sheet B). In pairs or groups, they discuss and analyse a journal entry which compares this opening with the opening of *Kensuke's Kingdom* in a chart or diagram (Sample Text 2). *T5, T8* | Sample pupils' responses. Evaluate the effectiveness of each type of entry, e.g. in the chart, note the use of graphic alternatives to complex sentences but still the use of metalanguage. *W6* | Read *The Suitcase Kid*. Suggest read to page 33. | Use preferred entry type to evaluate the effectiveness of the opening in own chosen text. *T1* |
| Day 3 | Applying – writing a journal entry which compares texts | Reread description of Kensuke (pages 67–70 from *Kensuke's Kingdom*). Read the description of Roxanne in *The Dancing Bear* (Resource Sheet B). Demo-draw/write a chart/diagram to note the key points of similarity and difference between the way in which the author describes the two characters in the two books (Sample Text 3). Focus on use of journal metalanguage. Using this chart/diagram as a skeletal plan, demo-write the first two sentences of a prose journal entry on same subject (Sample Text 3). *T6* | In reading journals, pupils complete the prose comparison of how characters are described using the appropriate metalanguage and some complex sentences to make effective comparisons. *T6, T12, S4, W6* | Identify a point from the chart and invite examples of pupils' developed viewpoints; focus on complex sentences and metalanguage. *T6, S4, W6* | Read *The Suitcase Kid*. Suggest read to page 52. | Character analysis – prose or chart form – on any significant character from own reading. *T1* |
| Day 4 | Empathising in role-play and writing | Read Andrea's description of her stepsister on pages 13–15 of *The Suitcase Kid*. Go into role as Andrea (hot-seating) and ask the pupils to question you. In pairs, pupils role-play the argument between Andrea and Katie.<br>Demo-write a transformation piece for journal entry, e.g. letter to agony aunt (Sample Text 4). *T8* | In reading journals, pupils write one of the following:<br>■ letter from Katie or Andy to same agony aunt but describing the problem slightly differently;<br>■ response from agony aunt;<br>■ script for playlet in which Katie tells her dad what happened *T8*. | Take examples of Katie's viewpoint. Lead discussion on how it might feel to be Katie (e.g. – small, vulnerable with similar family pressures to Andrea). *T8* | Read *The Suitcase Kid*. Continue to at least page 72. | Design and write own transformation piece showing empathy with any chosen character from own reading. Give brief orientation. *T8* |
| Day 5 | Summarising and evaluating | Reread the incident between Andrea and Katie (pages 68–70 of *The Suitcase Kid*). Discuss the effect of the use of first person on the reader. Demo-write an unbiased/balanced 3rd person summary of this, possibly from the point of view of a social worker. Indicate your use of complex sentences and metalanguage (Sample Text 5). *T9, S4, W6* | Pupils reread the family incident on pages 38–40 of *The Suitcase Kid*. Pupils write a balanced, 3rd person summary of this episode, offering an unbiased judgement of each child's role, and the roles of the adults in building up to the conflict. Pupils then offer brief personal advice to the protagonists on how to improve behaviour to lessen stress/conflict. *T9, S4, W6* | Active listening – volunteers read out summaries; class listens for evidence of fairness or bias. *T8* | Read *The Suitcase Kid*. Suggest read to page 96. | Select a conflict or stressful incident from own chosen text. Write 3rd person summary; offer a simple judgement and/or advice. |



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# Week 2

| Year 6 | Week 2 | Shared text, sentence and word level work | Independent/guided work | Plenary | Class novel | Possible homework suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Day 6 | Language investigation | Language investigation of Morpurgo's choice of vocabulary and use of sentence structure in *Kensuke's Kingdom*. Full details of possible investigations are included in Resource Sheet C. *S2, W5* | Continue the investigations in pairs or groups. *S2, W5* | Pupils feed back the results of their investigations and discuss the conclusions they have drawn. *S2, W5* | Continue to read *The Suitcase Kid*. Suggest read to page 122. | Pupils explore the language in their chosen text. *S2, W5* |
| Day 7 | Transforming a text | Reread pages 95-96 in *Kensuke's Kingdom* where Kensuke demolishes Michael's beacon. Discuss the boy's feelings of frustration. Discuss how people write poems or song lyrics to express their emotions, taking examples from pop stars, rap artists, etc. Demo-write a poem that encapsulates Michael's longing to be home and his anger with Kensuke (Sample Text 6). *T8* | Pupils write a poem, rap or song lyrics to portray the emotions of a character of their choice from either of the two texts, *Kensuke's Kingdom* or *The Suitcase Kid*. *T8* | Pupils share their poems and respond to each other's work. *T8* | Continue to read *The Suitcase Kid*. Suggest read to page 138. | Pupils redraft/revise their poems. *T8* |
| Day 8 | Creating story map | Identify conflict, and the resolution of conflict, as two of the themes of both novels. Demonstrate creating a 'story map' of *Kensuke's Kingdom*, showing the events which signal the change in the relationship between Michael and Kensuke (Sample Text 7). *T1* | Pupils create a 'story map' for *The Suitcase Kid*, showing the events which mark the changes in Andrea's relationships with others. *T1* | Ask the pupils what the key moments are. Discuss any disagreements. *T8* | Finish reading *The Suitcase Kid*. | Pupils create 'story map' for own chosen text. *T8* |
| Day 9 | Relating themes in the two novels to pupils' lives | Lead a discussion with the pupils of how the themes of conflict and the resolution of conflict often appear in everyday life. Use paired talk to explore how and when these themes occur in school life, and in the wider world. Encourage pupils to share their concerns. *T6* | Pupils reflect on an issue of conflict or conflict resolution that concerns them, and respond with a journal entry in the form of their choice (i.e. diagram, letter, poem, empathetic response, diary entry, etc.). *T8* | Ask pupils to tell you the form of their entry and record the range. Discuss which forms are more/less popular. *T8* | | Pupils revisit questions and comments in their first journal entry, and add to/refine these in the light of recent work. |
| Day 10 | Evaluating use of reading journal | Lead a class review of the results of using reading journals to explore a range of responses to a featured text. Organise pupils into groups to select and refine particular responses for inclusion in a class 'anthology' reading journal. *T8* | Create a communal journal. In groups, pupils review journal entries and choose items for anthology. Select pieces for revision and editing. Compile questions and comments for both authors to conclude anthology. *T1, T5, T6, T8* | Pupils add a final, reflective comment on what keeping a journal has meant for them and what they look forward to learning in English in Y7. Collect in the journals from the pupils going to secondary schools where the Y7 transition unit is going to be taught. | | |

# Year 6 Week 1 Detailed lesson plan

## Day 3

**Shared work**

- Tell the pupils that just as yesterday you compared two of Michael Morpurgo's story openings, today you will be comparing another aspect of his writing: presentation of character. Explain that today's work will lead to an entry in their reading journals.
- Show the pupils the two books from which the extracts are taken, *Kensuke's Kingdom* and *The Dancing Bear*. Tell the pupils that in each passage that you've chosen, the author introduces an important character, and that you will be comparing the extracts in order to have a close look at how he does this.
- Read each extract in its entirety (*Kensuke* pp. 67–70 and *The Dancing Bear* p.10) in order to allow the pupils to visualise each character.
- Tell the pupils that you will be making notes on each character in the form of a grid, as this is a good way of comparing and contrasting things because you can easily see similarities and differences. Refer to any other occasions in other subjects when you've used this method.
- Begin with the *Kensuke* text (enlarged/OHT) and ask the pupils in pairs to comment on the way Kensuke is first presented to us as readers. Take feedback, and record the findings on the grid.
- Now look at the *Dancing Bear* text (enlarged/OHT) and ask the pairs to do the same for the introduction of Roxanne.
- Turn back to the *Kensuke* text and ask the pairs to find three or four words or phrases that describe Kensuke's physical appearance. Take feedback, text mark the passage and record the pupils' findings on the grid.
- Use the *Dancing Bear* text (enlarged/OHT) and ask the pupils to look for evidence of Roxanne's physical appearance. Take feedback and record on the grid that there is no explicit physical description of Roxanne when she is introduced as a character. Ask the pupils to be thinking about why that might be – you will return to this point later.
- Turn back to *Kensuke* and ask the pupils to discuss in pairs how the author conveys to us how Kensuke is feeling. Take feedback, text mark and record responses on the grid.
- Repeat for Roxanne. The pupils will notice that Roxanne's feelings about her treatment are not described.
- Compare the two characters in the same way, looking this time at what they say, or don't say, and record the information on the grid.
- Ask the pupils to discuss in pairs what we as readers know about Kensuke and Roxanne at this point in the story, and how we feel about them. Take feedback and record any relevant comments.
- Point out to the pupils that both characters are introduced to readers through the eyes of a first person narrator, yet each is presented in a very different way. Ask the

pupils to discuss in pairs why they think the author has chosen to present each character so differently. In feedback, encourage them to speculate and to comment on each others' views.

- Explain that you are going to take the notes you've made on the grid and turn them into full sentences in order to end up with a journal entry that compares Morpurgo's presentation of the two characters. Demonstrate taking the first notes on the grid, which relate to physical description, and using them to compose a complex sentence or sentences. Emphasise your use of any technical language (e.g. references to unusual vocabulary, adjectives, powerful verbs, etc.) and of the connectives that might be suitable for a comparison.

### Independent work

Ask the pupils to work through the notes on the grid, turning each section into full sentences, just as you did. In their final sentence(s) they will need to give their opinion of why the author decided to present each character as he did. Tell them that in the plenary you will be asking some of them to read out their sentences for a particular section of the grid so you can discuss how effectively people have managed this.

### Plenary

Select a section from the grid and ask a couple of pupils to read out the sentences they developed from the notes. Invite others to comment, and discuss the impact of various phrases and sentence constructions. Finish the session by telling the pupils that tomorrow they will be doing some very different work on characters, using an extract from the class novel you are currently reading to them, *The Suitcase Kid*.

## Day 4

### Shared work

- Tell the pupils that you are going to prepare a different sort of entry in their reading journal, based on a detailed look at some of the characters in *The Suitcase Kid*. Read the extract (enlarged/OHT) from pp. 13–15 and tell the pupils that although this passage is largely about the character Katie, in fact we also learn a lot about Andy.
- Explain that in order to explore the character of Andy, you will be going into role as Andy in the hot seat and give the pupils a couple of minutes in pairs to think up some questions they would like to ask 'Andy'. (If the pupils are very familiar with the hot-seating technique, you could select a confident pupil to go into role.)
- After five minutes or so, come out of role and make brief notes on the board of any key things that have been mentioned that you would like to record.
- Tell the pupils that they are now going to have a couple of goes at being in role as one of the characters. Draw their attention to the words: ' ... Katie started calling me Andy Pandy. I couldn't stick it and I told her to shut up and she wouldn't.' Point out that the author has let us know that there was an argument, but hasn't told us what the girls actually said to each other. Invite them in pairs to invent the argument, imagining what their character would be likely to say and encouraging them to remember the kinds of things they say when they argue with their brothers and sisters, friends, stepsisters and brothers etc. Allow a couple of minutes for this. Ask one or two of the 'Katies' to tell you what they said.

- Now ask the pupils to swap roles and, in pairs as before, imagine how the argument might continue once Mum has left the room. Allow a few minutes. Again, find out what a couple of the 'Katies' said in the argument.
- Tell the pupils that you are now going to imagine once again that you are Andy, that you are desperately unhappy but feel you have no one to confide in. So you've decided to write a letter, as if you were Andy, to the agony aunt page of a magazine, asking for advice.
- Pass round copies of a letters page to an agony aunt in a magazine (appropriate to the age range!) so the pupils can see the sorts of letters they receive and the responses they give.
- Demonstrate writing a brief letter to an agony aunt, outlining why you are unhappy and the problems you have with Katie.
- Ask the pupils to reflect on how, so far, everything has been presented from Andy's point of view. Now you would like them to imagine how Katie might be feeling. Ask them to discuss this in their pairs for a couple of minutes and then take quick feedback.

**Independent work**

Tell the pupils that their task will be to write an entry for their reading journal in the form of a letter to the same agony aunt, imagining they are Katie, explaining how unhappy they are and the problems they are having with Andy. Pupils could work collaboratively in pairs or individually on this. Alternatively they could write a response from the agony aunt to the letter from Andy, or write a playlet of the discussion between Andy's mum and Katie's dad that might have taken place following the events in the extract.

**Plenary**

- Ask some pupils to read their letters aloud, while the others listen and try to identify any particularly convincing passages where pupils have successfully imagined themselves in Katie's shoes.
- Raise the issue of there always being two sides to every story and lead a short discussion on the fact that the class began the session by seeing the situation through Andy's eyes, but have now begun to look at it from another point of view. Why might this be important in a book like *The Suitcase Kid*?

# Introduction to Year 7 unit

The transition units in English comprise two weeks' (10 days') work after the Key Stage 2 tests in Year 6 and two weeks' (six days') work at the beginning of Year 7. There are objectives, at text and sentence levels, common to both years. These involve using a reading journal to deepen understanding of text and, as a writer, increasing control of complex sentences. Pupils who have taken part in the Year 6 unit will arrive in Year 7 with a reading journal.

## Key objective

The key objective in Year 7 is to read a range of recent fiction texts independently as the basis for developing critical reflection and personal response, e.g. *sharing views, keeping a reading journal*.

## Summary of connecting objectives

In continuing their reading journals, pupils will be shown how to use a variety of approaches to engage with text when reading and how to explore different ways of responding through talk and through writing. They will study how an author structures a text to prepare for the ending, and reflect on the differences between an oral recount and a narrative, using the author's own technique of taking a fragment of truth and weaving a story around it. Pupils will be consolidating their understanding and use of complex sentences. In the starter activities, pupils will be securing their knowledge of the correct spellings of vowels in words.

## Context

This unit of work aims to support Year 7 English teachers in building on the work pupils completed in Year 6, both by providing opportunities to draw on pupils' shared literacy experiences to establish a sense of continuity and cohesion in the new class, and by revising knowledge and skills developed in Key Stage 2 in order to extend attainment.

The unit uses a short story 'My Father is a Polar Bear' in *From Hereabout Hill* ISBN 07497 28728 by Michael Morpurgo, one of the authors studied in the Year 6 unit, as a link to previous work. The story is reproduced in full on pages 32–39. This short story was selected for a number of reasons:

- it has resonances with the theme of 'families' in the novels used in the Year 6 unit;
- it allows an exploration of the intended objectives, particularly further opportunities to demonstrate the use of a reading journal for response and reflection.

Collections of short stories which might serve the objectives equally well include:
*The Wonderful World of Henry Sugar and Six More* by Roald Dahl
*Badger on the Barge and Other Stories* by Janni Howker
*Out of Bounds* by Beverley Naidoo
*Nothing to be Afraid of* by Jan Mark

Activities have been suggested which will enable the pupils to get to know the text quickly, and also allow the pupils and teacher to begin to know each other in these early weeks of the term, recognising that in some areas, secondary schools may have new

pupils from several feeder schools. To support the planning, sample texts have been provided which can be used, adapted or replaced by the teacher's own examples if preferred.

## Resources

The resources consist of Sample Texts 8–10 and Resource Sheets D–H.

### Sample Texts 8–10

These are either journal entries for analysis by the teacher (or pupils) or journal entries for demonstration writing. They are annotated so that the teacher has the information when analysing a journal entry and knows what the pupils should have produced when they analyse an entry. They may also help the teacher to decide what to articulate aloud when demonstrating writing.

### Resource Sheets D–H

These contain detailed information for particular activities and are referenced in the week plan.

## Homework

Suggested homework has been provided for each day. Teachers will decide which homework tasks to select according to how often pupils will do homework related to English. None of the lessons depends upon the proposed homework.

## Starter activities

These are built into the week plan and detailed notes are provided on Resource Sheet D on pages 30–31.

## Reading journals

The use of reading journals in primary schools is growing. The Year 6 unit is designed to teach pupils how reading journals can be used effectively (see Resource Sheet A on page 18). The Year 7 unit continues to do this so that pupils at Key Stage 3 can use reading journals independently to enhance their reading. However, a second reason for using reading journals in these transition units is that they provide Year 7 teachers with some evidence of the quality of the pupils' thinking and their ability to express it in writing.

In the week plans which follow, the objectives which are addressed in each section of the lesson are referenced by number and initial for text (reading or writing) sentence, word, and speaking and listening, e.g. *TR17, TW3, S1, W1, S&L6*.

# Two-week plan for Year 7 – Week 1

| Lesson | Starter<br>10 mins | Introduction<br>Estimated time 20 mins | Development<br>Estimated time 20 mins | Plenary<br>10 mins | Possible homework suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1<br>Recap of Y6 work | Revision of long and short vowels. Teacher demonstration at the board. White board activity followed by card sort. | Discuss purpose of reading journals; pupils recall what they most liked/disliked about the work they did on *Kensuke's Kingdom* and *The Suitcase Kid*. Show two Y6 journal entries as examples (Sample Texts 8 and 9). Pupils read out a selection of different types of journal entries to illustrate the possible range of responses. *TR17* | Pupils make brief notes in their journals about a book /magazine /piece of writing they have read and enjoyed since leaving primary school (5 mins). In pairs, they use the notes to tell their partner about what they have read. Titles and authors are written on Post-its. *TW3* | Post-its sorted on board according to broad categories to celebrate the class's range of reading and validate personal preferences. Pupils note in their journals any titles which appeal to them. *TR17* | Pupils write an unstructured journal entry based on something they have enjoyed reading recently. *TR17 TW3* |
| 2<br>Identify time structure of story | Recap of three ways of spelling long vowel *a* sound. Pupils generate words that follow these patterns. Pupils compare words and lengths of lists. | Before reading 'My Father is a Polar Bear' to the class, draw five equally spaced lines across the board (as on Resource Sheet F) and ask the pupils to do the same on a clean page of their journals. Explain that in order to identify the distinct episodes in the story, you will pause at relevant moments in the story to allow pupils to mark the dates on their timelines. *TR17* | In pairs, pupils discuss and make notes on their timelines, showing what Andrew finds out about his real father:<br>■ before he can remember;<br>■ as a young child;<br>■ as a teenager;<br>■ as an adult.<br>Pupils then reread the final paragraph and think about how it links back to the rest of the story. *TR15* | Analyse the ways in which the final paragraph of the story links back to the beginning, e.g. the use of the pronoun *He's*. Speculate on why the author chose this title for the story. *TR15* | Pupils are given extract from the story of the trip to *The Snow Queen* to read in preparation for next lesson, and asked to think of an event they recall from their own past. *TR17* |
| 3<br>Analyse text | Card sort investigation of common spelling patterns for long *i* and long *e* when followed by *f*. | Reread the section where the brothers see their father perform as a polar bear. Identify word choices and sentence constructions which paint the picture vividly (Resource Sheet G). Discuss how memories of childhood can be powerful, and give a personal example (Sample Text 10). *TR 6* | In pairs, pupils tell each other something they remember from when they were very young. Each prepares and retells their partner's story to another pair in 3rd person. As a journal entry, pupils take their own memory, or one they have heard reported, and make notes or diagrams as a memory jogger. *S&L 2; S&L 6* | Discuss the features that make spoken recounts effective for listeners. *S&L 2; S&L 6* | Task relating to Word level work. |

Pupils should be encouraged to reflect on Michael Morpurgo as an author in the light of their knowledge of *Kensuke's Kingdom* and other novels and 'My Father is a Polar Bear' and other short stories.

# Week 2

| Lesson | Starter<br>10 mins | Introduction<br>Estimated time 20 mins | Development<br>Estimated time 20 mins | Plenary<br>10 mins | Possible homework suggestions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4<br>Apply in writing | Pupils find unstressed vowels within given group of words. Pupils generate range of strategies to help them spell those words. | Referring to Morpurgo's use of 'truth – mostly' in his introduction to the story, use the notes of a childhood memory and, referring to the Narrative Checklist (Resource Sheet E), rework them into a narrative using demonstration writing (Sample Text 10). *TW 3; TR15; S1* | Pupils rework their own notes into narratives, drawing on their existing knowledge about writing narrative, referring to the Narrative Checklist (Resource Sheet E) and incorporating any stylistic features they have noted in Morpurgo's work. (Could use their journals for examples.) *TW3; S1* | Pupils read out examples of how they have developed an oral recount into a written narrative. Others identify the techniques used, referring to Narrative Checklist (Resource Sheet E). *S & L 2; TW 3* | Pupils complete /refine their narratives. *TW3; S2* |
| 5<br>Analyse | Card sort of words with unstressed vowels to categorise and identify the unstressed vowel. | Andrew says 'In a way I was lucky, because I always had two fathers' (p. 29). Model locating textual evidence of both fathers and representing impressions of each in diagrammatic/pictorial/grid form. In pairs, pupils use white boards or notepads to explore a variety of ways to note their impressions and to make a final summary of each father (Resource Sheet H). *TR 6* | Andrew strongly admires his father's skill as an actor. As a private journal entry, pupils choose someone they admire, describe the quality they most value and say why it is important. *TW3; TR17* | Sample the qualities pupils have chosen (not the people) and list them. In pairs pupils think of other positive qualities, and list them. *TR17* | Pupils rank qualities in order of importance for different categories of people e.g. parent, friend, teacher, celebrity, etc. *TR17* |
| 6<br>Analyse text | Generating lists of words beginning with the letter *c* followed by a vowel. Identifying the influence of vowel on the letter *c* . Teacher introduces *cy*. 'Show me' activity to discriminate between hard and soft *c*. | Reread sections that refer to the secrecy surrounding the boys' father (p. 31, lines 10-16; p. 33, lines 1-9; pp. 39, lines 26-30; p. 40; p. 41, lines 1-10; p. 43, lines 3-7). Lead a discussion on the brothers' response to the family secret, and their mother's, father's and Douglas' possible reasons for initiating and perpetuating the secret. *TR17* | Pupils compose a journal entry giving their personal opinion of the adults' decision to keep their father's identity secret. *TR17 TW3* | Establish how many pupils agree/disagree with the adults' decision. Ask pupils with opposing views to share their written reasons. *TR17* | Pupils review journal entries, complete/redraft/ improve as necessary to prepare journals for joint Y7 display or assembly. *TR17* |

# Year 7 Week 2 Detailed lesson plan

## Day 4

**Starter:** See Resource Sheet D

### Introduction

- Reread the introduction to the story, where the author writes of having 'woven truths together'. Explain that unlike autobiography, which deals in facts, this kind of first person narrative by an author about his or her childhood uses some facts, or truths, as the basis of a story, but invents other details in order to draw in the readers and keep them interested. This means that you can take something quite ordinary or unexciting, and make it much more gripping.
- Remind pupils that in the last lesson, they each told a story about their childhood. Ask them to think for a moment or two about the different meanings of the word 'story': you meant them to tell each other 'a truth' from their past, not a made-up story. Clarify that today, the word 'story' will mean a fiction, a made-up narrative.
- Tell the pupils that you also had a story – 'a truth' from the past, and show your brief notes about it (part of Sample Text 10). Explain that you are going to do what Michael Morpurgo says he often does, which is take your 'truth' and turn it into a story by adding in all sorts of invented details. You will be showing them how you can 'weave' a story and make it sound so convincing that you are making 'a truth stranger than fiction'.
- Display a copy of the Narrative Checklist (Resource Sheet E). Remind them that they used it in Year 6 if they did the Year 6 transition unit, and ask them to notice when you are using one of the features on it.
- Using demonstration writing, write the story (Sample Text 10) that is developed from the brief notes of yesterday's oral recount. The annotations provide suggested teaching points which address the stated objectives and allow you to 'think aloud' and explain your decisions about word choices, sentence structure, tone, and various other compositional points from the narrative checklist.

### Development

- Tell the pupils that they will now be taking the brief notes they made of the incident they told yesterday, and turning them into a first person narrative, as you have just done. Remind them to use everything they've learned in the past about writing effective narratives, and to use the checklist to remind themselves.

### Plenary

- Ask for volunteers to choose a couple of sentences to read aloud, where they have used a specific feature from the checklist or from earlier class discussion.
- Tell the others to listen carefully to see if they can identify the techniques or features that have been used.

### Suggested homework

- Pupils could be asked to complete, redraft or refine their narratives as appropriate.
- Pupils could be asked to make a comment in their journals, giving their views on 'truth' and 'stories'.

## Day 5

**Starter:** See Resource Sheet D

**Introduction**

- Make sure pupils can see a copy of the short story, and have a white board or clipboard (individuals or pairs) on which to record. Find the quotation, 'In a way I was lucky, because I always had two fathers' (p. 29).
- Tell the pupils that you will be looking at some of the references in the text to both of Andrew's fathers, and together you will be discussing the evidence of how Andrew feels about each of them, and recording what you deduce or infer.
- Remind them that there are many ways of recording our thoughts, views and opinions, and ask pupils quickly to name a few, e.g. words, diagrams of various sorts, pictures. Illustrate a couple briefly on the board to confirm everyone understands. Tell them that today they will be trying out different techniques to find out which is the most effective way for them to explore ideas.
- Explain that you will be recording things for everyone to see as an overall summary of the lesson, but that you might try out some other methods as well.
- Use Resource Sheet H to locate the relevant page numbers and quotations. For a selection of examples, read the quoted phrase or sentence, and ask the pupils to decide, in pairs, what they can tell from it about Andrew's view of each of his fathers, referring to the text for evidence. For the first few quotations, take feedback, and once a viewpoint has been established, ask pupils to record this in some way. Encourage pupils to try out different ways of recording. Ask them to show you their white boards or clipboards, and pick out a variety of responses, emphasising that there is no correct way of responding; this is a chance to experiment.
- After the first few quotations, it should be possible for the pupils to discuss the quotation and record the information without taking feedback so that pace is maintained.
- When you decide that the pupils have recorded enough to summarise Andrew's feelings about each father, ask them to do this using the recording technique they prefer (spidergram, list, sketch, etc.) and discuss the fact that although there is probably broad agreement about viewpoint, this can be noted in many different ways.

**Development**

- Remind the pupils that one quality Andrew clearly admires in his real father is his acting skill, as he makes several references to it.
- Ask them to choose someone they admire, and decide on the quality they most value in that person, and why it is important.
- Pupils write a private entry in their journals, describing the quality they admire and saying why they think it is important.

**Plenary**

- Make a list of as many as possible of the different qualities (not the people) that pupils have chosen. In pairs, pupils think of other positive qualities, and record these in any form they choose, drawing on their explorations in the main part of the lesson.

Resource Sheet A

# Using a reading journal

Reading journals, sometimes known as reading logs, can take a variety of forms and can involve different people: pupils only, pupils and teacher in dialogue, pupils, teacher and parents in a two- or three-way written dialogue. In this unit, suggestions are made as to possible ways of using a journal with Year 6 and Year 7 pupils, but these can be adapted and altered to suit a wide range of purposes, depending on the teacher's priorities. Before deciding how to make use of the materials in this unit, you may want to consider the following:

- Reading journals can provide a space for critical reflection and evaluation.
- Entries can take an infinite variety of forms: jottings, notes, ideas, diagrams, grids, charts, sketches, lists, mind maps, questions, predictions, diary entries, letters, playscripts, poems, stories, as well as more formal writing such as reviews or pieces related to close analysis of character, plot, setting, author's choice of language, and so on.
- Journals can provide pupils with an opportunity to speculate, explore, play with ideas and be tentative and uncertain in their responses. This may be particularly important for pupils who, for any number of reasons, currently find it difficult to express their opinions orally.
- Journals can allow pupils, whatever their reading ability, not only to respond to texts, but to investigate how the author provoked that response.
- 'Transformation pieces' are those where an idea or theme from the text has been transformed into another medium such as a poem, a letter or even a picture.

The following list was contributed by a Year 6 teacher.

**What can I write in my reading journal?**

- Write a description of the main character – their looks, the way they dress, the way they talk and their personality.
- Choose a descriptive passage and make a list of examples of vivid imagery, e.g. similes, metaphors, alliteration, personification, noun phrases, etc.
- List the words and phrases used to create an atmosphere, e.g. a scary or spooky one.
- Write about what a character might be thinking or feeling at any stage of the story – you could write it in the first person.
- Predict when you are about half way through a book, what might happen.
- Write down some words you had difficulty reading and had not met before. Find their meanings in a dictionary and write them down.
- Write about your favourite part of a book and why you liked it.
- Write down three facts you have learned from a non-fiction book.
- Pick a descriptive word from the text, write it down and, using a thesaurus, write down five synonyms and antonyms for that word.
- Write about how a non-fiction book is set out.
- Write some advice to a character in trouble.
- Write a diary entry that a character might write after an incident in the story.
- Challenge yourself! Write a 50-word summary of a whole plot!
- Write whether you would recommend the book or not, and why.

Sample Text 1

## Comparison of the openings of *Kensuke's Kingdom* and *The Butterfly Lion* by Michael Morpurgo

Michael Morpurgo has written both of these texts in the first person. I think this gives them a more private feeling – as if the narrator is actually talking just to me when I read the text, so I feel really involved. Both narrators are also the main characters of the stories they tell, which means that they will be directly involved in the action. I think this device usually makes books more convincing. Furthermore, both introductions use a flashback technique, with the narrator thinking back and explaining something significant in his past. This time-travel idea is always interesting, making it a bit like reliving someone's personal history. It is also reassuring because, no matter how scary or dangerous events may get, I know that the narrator has survived to tell the tale!

Both openings refer to promises made in the past. One promise was to Kensuke but we are kept in suspense as to who this might be. The other promise to 'them' also remains a mystery. Everyone makes promises, so this is a point of contact with readers. But these promises seem especially dramatic because, even as adults, the narrators have never forgotten them and have never broken them.

The short opening sentence from *Kensuke's Kingdom* is stark, dramatic and mysterious, hooking in the reader straight away. Possibly linking with the idea of 'coming back from the dead', it makes this a sensational opening. Michael Morpurgo also uses an emotional hook in the opening of *The Butterfly Lion*, but the content is less dramatic, so he boosts it with colourful, descriptive language to build attractive images. The short opening sentence just states a simple fact about butterflies, but it relies heavily on the universal appeal of these beautiful creatures to draw in his readers. The author reflects on the poignant fact of life that butterflies 'flower and flutter' gloriously, but die all too soon. After that, I really wanted to find out more about the fantastical butterfly lion, 'blue and shimmering in the sun', that the narrator assures us was not a dream. I couldn't tell straight away what the story would be about, but my imagination was captured by the butterflies!

# RESOURCES

Comparison of the openings of *Kensuke's Kingdom*, and *The Butterfly Lion* by Michael Morpurgo

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Convention – mentioning the author by name
Making a technical point, then backing it up with a personal reaction

Appreciation/explanation of authorial technique

Use of discussion connective to structure points of comparison

Close reference to content

Use of non-finite verb in second clause – implies that the hooking effect is ongoing and/or will always work

Use of short quotations from the text; using author's own words to recreate the magic

Technical vocabulary

Complex sentence used to set out a cause/effect relationship; use of 'which' as connective

Evaluation of impact – source of interest; reassurance

Personal response interwoven with analysis

Deliberate use of 'But' to start a sentence – used to signal clearly a point to come

Complex sentence to explain the interest factors in the promises; includes a drop-in element 'even as adults' following the conjunction

Appreciation of authorial technique

Finishing with a convincing personal evaluation using an idea that links effectively with the text

Sample text – annotation



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# Extracts from *The Butterfly Lion* and *The Dancing Bear*

## *The Butterfly Lion* – opening paragraphs

*Chilblains and Semolina Pudding*

Butterflies live only short lives. They flower and flutter for just a few glorious weeks, and then they die. To see them, you have to be in the right place at the right time. And that's how it was when I saw the butterfly lion – I happened to be in just the right place, at just the right time. I didn't dream him. I didn't dream any of it. I saw him, blue and shimmering in the sun, one afternoon in June when I was young. A long time a o. But I don't forget. I mustn't forget. I promised them I wouldn't.

I was ten, and away at boarding school in deepest Wiltshire. I was far from home and I didn't want to be. It was a diet of Latin and stew and rugby and detentions and cross-country runs and chilblains and marks and squeaky beds and semolina pudding. And then there was Basher Beaumont who terrorised and tormented me, so that I lived every waking moment of my life in dread of him. I had often thought of running away, but only once ever plucked up the courage to do it.

## *The Dancing Bear* – opening paragraphs

I was born in this mountain village longer ago than I like to remember. I was to have been a shepherd like my grandfather and his grandfather before him, but when I was three, an accident left me with a limp. Shepherding wasn't ever going to be possible, so I became a teacher instead.

For nearly forty years now, I have been the schoolmaster here. I live alone in a house by the school, content with my own company and my music. To play my hunting horn high in the mountains, and to hear its echoes soaring with the eagles, is as close as I have been to complete happiness.

Yet I suppose you could say that I became a sort of shepherd after all: I shepherd children instead of sheep, that's all. I teach them, and I'm a kind of uncle to them even after they've left school. They think I'm a bit eccentric – I play my horn and I talk to myself more than I should. Like all children, they can be a bit cruel from time to time. They call me 'Three Legs' or 'Long John Silver' when they think I'm not listening, but you have to put up with that.

## *The Dancing Bear* – page 10

Roxanne was about seven years old at the time. An orphan child, she lived with her grandfather, who was a dour and unloving man. She was a solitary girl, but never lonely, I think. At school, she appeared to be a dreamer, a thinker. After school, with her grandfather busy in his fields, she would often wander off by herself, watching rabbits, maybe, or following butterflies. She was forever going missing. Then her grandfather would come shouting around the village for her. When he found her, he would shake her or even hit her. I protested more than once, but was told to mind my own business. A friendless, bitter old man, Roxanne's grandfather was interested in nothing unless there was some money in it. Roxanne was a nuisance to him. She knew it – and everyone knew it. But he was the only mother and father she had.

## Comparison of the openings of *Kensuke's Kingdom* and *The Dancing Bear* by Michael Morpurgo

| | Opening of *Kensuke's Kingdom* | Opening of *The Dancing Bear* |
|---|---|---|
| **Character** | Male – not yet named | Male – not yet named |
| **Voice** | First person – 'I' | First person – 'I' |
| **Verb tense** | Past tense to start<br>Switches to present in second paragraph | Past tense to start<br>Switches to present in second paragraph |
| **Content** | Flashback – looking back over more than 10 years<br>Specific date/event – disappeared 12/7/88; night before birthday<br>Drama and mystery – disappearance and lies | Flashback – looking back over more than 40 years of teaching<br>General information; no specific focus<br>Calm, reflective and content |
| **Main hook** | How/why did he disappear? How did he come back?<br>Who is Kensuke? Why did he make the writer lie?<br>Why was he so good? | Mild interest in character; still building ... |
| **Other characters** | Kensuke – mysterious; a good man? But he made the writer promise to keep quiet and made him lie | |
| **Any other points** | Young man; incident from boyhood<br>There is a change ... the writer can speak out now<br>Terse, clipped style – quite urgent | Older man; schoolteacher<br>No hint of change<br>Elegant style; literary ... suits a schoolteacher<br>Powerful image – music 'soaring with eagles' |



Sample Text

# Comparison of the openings of *Kensuke's Kingdom* and *The Dancing Bear* by Michael Morpurgo, with annotations

| | Opening of *Kensuke's Kingdom* | Opening of *The Dancing Bear* |
|---|---|---|
| **Character** | Male – not yet named | Male – not yet named |
| **Voice** | First person – 'I' | First person – 'I' |
| **Verb tense** | Past tense to start<br>Switches to present in second paragraph | Past tense to start<br>Switches to present in second paragraph |
| **Content** | Flashback – looking back over more than 10 years<br>Specific date/event – disappeared 12/7/88; night before birthday<br>Drama and mystery – disappearance and lies | Flashback – looking back over more than 40 years of teaching<br>General information; no specific focus<br>Calm, reflective and content |
| **Main hook** | How/why did he disappear? How did he come back?<br>Who is Kensuke? Why did he make the writer lie?<br>Why was he so good? | Mild interest in character; still building ... |
| **Other characters** | Kensuke – mysterious; a good man? But he made the writer promise to keep quiet and made him lie | |
| **Any other points** | Young man; incident from boyhood<br>There is a change ... the writer can speak out now<br>Terse, clipped style – quite urgent | Older man; schoolteacher<br>No hint of change<br>Elegant style; literary ... suits a schoolteacher<br>Powerful image – music 'soaring with eagles' |

Table or chart contains same key points of information as would prose equivalent

No need for function words used for organisation or for grammatical correctness

Points of comparison can be accessed/scanned quickly and easily

Metalanguage used – both in headings/labels and in notes

Note-form recording – quick and efficient

Prose passage would have to be read more carefully

Less 'personal' than prose – no opportunity to make the writing 'your own'



RESOURCES

# RESOURCES

## Comparing and contrasting the introduction of the characters of Kensuke and Roxanne

### Demo-write grid

| | Kensuke | Roxanne |
|---|---|---|
| How character first seen by reader | Through first person narrator's eyes. His first impression – initially mistaken for an orang-utan. | Through first person narrator's eyes. Gives a few facts about her life. Summarises his knowledge of her up to the point where the story starts. |
| Physical appearance | Very small, very old and thin. Copper colour skin. Nearly bald, wispy beard. Hooded eyes. Moves fast. Wears only trousers and knife. | About 7 years old. No details of physical appearance. |
| Character's feelings | Furious and very upset. | No evidence of Roxanne's feelings about her grandfather for the way he treats her. |
| What character says | Yells one word over and over that is clearly important to him. | Does not speak. |
| Presentation of character | Through author's eyes. See how Kensuke looks, behaves, speaks and feels, as if he is in front of us. | Described as *solitary, but not lonely*. Our knowledge of her is hazy and vague, as if we see her from a distance. Possibly wilful, unhappy, sullen. |

*Description separated into various features*

*Correct technical/ metalanguage*

*Information given in note form*

*Evidence from text*

*Hypothesising from given information*

### Demo-write prose (first paragraph)

*Use of meta language*

*Connective signalling difference*

The first person narrator of *'Kensuke's Kingdom'* believes he has glimpsed an orang-utan, and since we, as readers, are seeing everything through his eyes, we are startled by the very short sentence, 'He was a man', just as the narrator was shocked to see a human. We are given a vivid description of his physical appearance, particularly through the use of powerful verbs such as *scooping, agitated, trembling, shaking, gesticulating* and *haranguing*, which convey the sense of sudden movement and threat. In contrast, although Roxanne is also introduced to us by a first person narrator who has obviously seen her many times, he gives us no details at all of her appearance so that we have to create our own picture using our imaginations.

*Explanation clearly expressed through complex sentence*

Sample Texts

# Annotated demo-write of letter to an agony aunt

Agony aunts known by their first names – informal, encourages people to feel they have a friend to turn to

Dear Aggie,

Andrea has been reading about others' problems – perhaps hoping to find an answer to her own

She is aware of what others might think

I always read your letters page in the paper, and I know my problem might not seem very serious compared to some people's, but to me it is. My mum and dad split up a while ago, and I take it in turns to stay with them. The trouble is that my mum's moved in with a man who's got a daughter my age, which is 10, and I can't stand her. Whenever I see my mum, I have to share a bedroom with my stepsister Katie. She is very two-faced and sucks up to adults, who all think she's sweet. If only they knew! She teases me all the time about my name, she won't share her stuff, or take turns, and starts arguments. Because she's much smaller than me, everyone takes her side and I end up getting the blame.It's so unfair. She has no idea what it's like to have to live in two different places, or how much I miss our old house. I feel so miserable and I can't tell my mum or my dad about it. What can I do?

Complex sentence containing three subordinate clauses to get the information in economically

Briefly summarises the situation causing the problem

Lapses into informal, non-standard English as she expresses her feelings about Katie

More like spoken language than written language

Longer sentence containing list of misdemeanours

Shows her sense of having no one to turn to

Correct use of language for a letter

Yours sincerely,

Andrea West

# Annotated demo-write of third person summary and balanced judgement of a conflict event

Connective signalling disagreement

Mrs West, Andrea's mother, wanted Andrea to live with her permanently. However, Mr West disputed this and complained in writing, in addition to making numerous visits and telephone calls.

Deduced from Katie's question: "You're not going to be here always?"

While Andrea was ill in bed, Katie heard of the proposal that Andrea should move in with them for good, which came as a shock to her. Katie was used to having her own bedroom, and, as she and Andrea did not get along, did not look forward to having to share it permanently. Katie was almost certainly jealous of Andrea's mum, and resented the time and attention her dad was giving to his new partner. Unable to express her feelings of jealousy and resentment to anyone, Katie was taking her anger out on Andrea. Because she herself was feeling ignored and rejected by her dad, she tried to make Andrea feel ignored and rejected too, by claiming that neither of Andrea's parents truly wanted her. She was probably doing what some people do when they are sad and upset: being hurtful to someone else, even blaming them for things that are not their fault.

Inferred from Katie's behaviour

Use of subordinate clause to open sentence

Colon used before information that expands or illustrates the main clause

Speculation, based on relating issues from the story to own wider experience

Connective used to open a balanced argument

Although Katie behaved badly to Andrea in this episode in the story, it is important to take into account Katie's emotions. She has had to cope with a new mum and stepsister entering her life, and this has probably made her confused and angry.

Sample texts

Resource Sheet C

# Language investigations

**Objectives**
Sentence level – to conduct detailed language investigations through ... reading;
Word level – to invent words using known roots, prefixes and suffixes, e.g. *vacca + phobe = someone who has a fear of cows;*

Sampling Morpurgo's choice of vocabulary and use of sentence structure in *Kensuke's Kingdom*: suggested passages for discussion.

**p.128 – final paragraph**

'The gibbons howled their accusations at me ... the entire forest cackling and screeching its condemnation.'

Discuss how we can deduce from this paragraph Michael's feelings of guilt, and how they make him imagine that the whole world knows what he has done. Identify the use of personification (*howled their accusations ... screeching its condemnation*) and discuss its effects.

Suggestion for supported composition (oral or written): tell the children to imagine they have done something they feel guilty about, and that they are running through the local streets. Try thinking up a sentence based on the structure of '*The gibbons howled ...* ' using images based on local surroundings, e.g. houses, cars, street lights, cats' eyes, etc.

**p. 106 – lines 7-19**

*'Nothing in the forest alarmed him, not the howling gibbons ... not the bees that swarmed about him ... '*

Discuss the structure of this sentence: the effect of starting it with the word *Nothing*, the cumulative effect of *not the ... not the ...*

Reread the whole paragraph. Can we infer anything about Michael's feelings for Kensuke from this description?

**p.119 – main paragraph**

Kensuke starts to tell Michael his life story. Identify the verb tenses. All except one (*came*) are present tense, and Kensuke always speaks in the present tense, almost never past or future. Encourage the children to speculate on why that might be, asking them to think about Kensuke's past, and his future.

**p.108-109 – description of daily life**

Michael experiences many things on the island which are completely new to him and which he does not know the real names of, e.g. '*a thick pulpy fruit juice*'; '*red bananas*'; '*painting shells*'; '*raw fish*'. Using dictionaries and prior knowledge of word roots, prefixes and suffixes, invent possible names for these or other objects.

Sample Text ©

RESOURCES

# Annotated demo-write of poem

Michael's first reaction as he watches Kensuke ruin his beacon is fury. Using verbs of force, power and pain to show how he feels.
Rage
Feet stamping
Glass shattering
Blood pounding
Fists clenching
Tears stinging
Michael sees Kensuke's eyes 'full of rage' and Michael's own anger grows as Kensuke destroys his beacon.
Using powerful verbs from the text that create a vivid picture of Kensuke's destruction.
The junk becomes 'a spot on the horizon'.
Michael's hope of being rescued disappears bit by bit.
Fade
Ship shrinking
Hope seeping
Life stretching
Heart swelling
Eyes filling
Michael's anger turns to despair as he realises the consequences of what Kensuke has done.
Michael imagines being stuck on the island for the rest of his life as if it were a prison sentence — a 'life stretch'.
Michael's sadness, as he realises his longing for home is hopeless, becomes unbearable.
His feelings swing back again to anger. 'I was so enraged . . .'
Rage

## Further points about the language

Rage
Fade
Rage

Using half-rhymes to draw attention to these words. The idea of emotions surging back and forth is meant to suggest the constant sound of the waves which would be ever present on the island.

*-ing* words: using verbs to emphasise action, both the external, visible actions of Kensuke, and also the violence of Michael's feelings.



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Sample text 7

# Story map of conflict in *Kensuke's Kingdom*



**Tracking/mapping the events in the novel which signal the transformation of the relationship between Michael and Kensuke**

At each of these moments in the novel, Kensuke is in a position of power and authority over Michael. The language is that of prisoners and captors. The conflict between them reaches a climax when Kensuke destroys Michael's beacon.

p. 76 'We were not friends. We would not be friends ... He would keep me alive ... but only so long as I lived by his rules.'
p. 82 'Surely this must mean that he had forgiven me ... ?'
p. 86 'He was looking after me, ... but he was also keeping me prisoner.'
p. 87 'Who I thought of now as my captor.'
p. 91 'This was a command that I should obey.'
p. 95 'The old man was standing over me ... he dismantled my beacon.'

p. 98 Kensuke rescues Michael from being stung to death by jellyfish, but the actual event is not described.
*This episode marks the turning point in their relationship.*

p. 100 'My erstwhile enemy, my captor, had become my saviour.'
p. 104 'He gave it to me. His smile said everything.'
p. 105 'I was to fish with him.'
p. 110 'He took such a delight in teaching me (to paint).'
*Kensuke has taken on the role of parent to Michael.*

p. 112 'You teach me speak English.'
*Michael has something to give Kensuke in return: the relationship begins to be more balanced.*

p. 113 'The long silence in which our friendship had been forged ... ' (compare p. 76).
p. 124 'It had been Kensuke ... who had saved me.'
*Michael discovers that he has owed Kensuke his life all along.*

p. 129 Michael betrays Kensuke's trust by sending a letter in a bottle.
*Michael's action alters the relationship briefly.*
p. 132 'I grieved for my lost friendship ... What I had done was ... treachery.'

*Kensuke gradually realises Michael's need to go home, and decides to act unselfishly.*
p. 137 'It was after our reconciliation ... '
*The friendship is re-established, and is stronger than ever. Each begins to understand the needs and feelings of the other. Their differences are resolved.*
p. 159 Kensuke makes Michael promise to keep his existence a secret.
*The two characters are now in a position of equality. Each loves and respects the other.*

RESOURCES

Resource Sheet 0

# Starter activities Year 7

## Lesson 1

Remind pupils of long and short vowel distinction. Write up a sentence that includes long and short *a* – e.g. 'Amy ate an apple'. Ask pupils in pairs to copy the sentence on personal white board and mark up long and short vowels – e.g. underline long *a*, put a ring round short *a*. Ask pupils to hold up white boards so you can assess responses. Demonstrate correct marking on your sentence. Give out cards with words that exemplify the ways of spelling long vowel *a*.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| way | came | bake | shape |
| complain | stain | rain | play |
| same | fête | away | sane |
| fail | slay | face | great |
| ray | blame | brain | aim |
| inflate | they | pray | trail |
| weigh | place | grey | rake |
| lake | sail | eight | make |
| pain | stay | today | explain |

Ask pupils to work in pairs to sort these words into groups with common spelling patterns. Then ask pupils for their observations (prompts include: What is the most likely spelling at the end of words? (*-ay*). What is the most likely pattern in the middle? (*-ai-* and split digraph *a-e*). Which are the irregular spellings? (e.g. *great, weigh, they.*)

## Lesson 2

Recap the main ways of spelling long vowel *a*. Ask pupils to work in pairs to generate the longest list they can of words in each of those categories; *ay*, *ai*, *a-e*, others. Then get pupils to count words in each column – establish who has the longest list in each category and get those pupils to read out their list. Correct any misconceptions.

## Lesson 3

Remind pupils of investigations in Lessons 1 and 2. Distribute cards that contain words which exemplify different ways of spelling long vowel *i* and long vowel *e* when followed by *t* phoneme.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| beat | fight | light | plight | slight |
| beet | fleet | meat | quite | spite |
| bite | flight | meet | right | sweet |
| bleat | fright | might | seat | tight |
| bright | heat | mite | sheet | treat |
| cheat | height | neat | sight | wheat |
| eat | kite | night | site | white |
| feet | knight | peat | sleet | |

Ask pupils to choose either the long *i* or the long *e* and to sort those words into common spelling patterns. Then do the same again with the other long vowel. Then ask pupils how they remember whether a word is spelled 'eat' or 'eet', 'ight' or 'ite'.

## Lesson 4

Write up a short list of words that contain an unstressed and/or unpronounced vowel – e.g. *history, easily, difference, January, business, interested, fattening, Wednesday, definitely, vegetable*. Explain that all of these words have something in common which makes them tricky to spell. Ask pupils to work individually to identify the common difficulty. Take suggestions and then identify the unstressed vowel in one or two of the words. Model some strategies for remembering how to spell two of these words – e.g. syllabification of *Wed-nes-day* and building word from root as in *fatten + ing*. Then ask pupils to work in pairs, firstly to identify the unstressed/unpronounced vowel in the remaining words and then to devise a strategy for remembering the spelling of that word. Then take each word in turn and call on one of the pairs to give a strategy. Draw out alternatives from other pairs.

## Lesson 5

Distribute cards with words that have unstressed or unpronounced vowels ending in *ary, -ery, -en, -er* and *-erence*.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| conference | desperate | reference | inference | secretary |
| boundary | flattery | library | wakening | stationery |
| deafening | January | frightening | primary | voluntary |
| general | difference | literacy | widening | desperate |

Ask pupils to sort words into common patterns. Take feedback and draw attention to the high number of words containing *-er* and *-en* patterns.

## Lesson 6

Write up five words that start with c followed by each one of the five vowels, e.g. *cat, celery, circle, coat, cupboard*. Ask pupils individually to extend these lists adding as many words as they can in each group. Ask pupils to discuss with a partner the differences in the initial phonemes. Is there a pattern? Take feedback – establish that *ci* and *ce* usually soften the *c*. Teacher generates examples where soft *c* occurs other than at the beginning of the word – e.g. December. Then demonstrate soft *c* created by a following *y* – e.g. *cylinder, fancy*.

'My Father is a Polar Bear'
by Michael Morpurgo
from *Hereabout Hill*,
published by
Heinemann Educational





# My Father is a Polar Bear

*This story is a tissue of truth – mostly. As with many of my stories, I have woven truths together and made from them a truth stranger than fiction. My father was a polar bear – honestly.*

Tracking down a polar bear shouldn't be that difficult. You just follow the pawprints – easy enough for any competent Innuit. My father is a polar bear. Now if you had a father who was a polar bear, you'd be curious, wouldn't you? You'd go looking for him. That's what I did, I went looking for him, and I'm telling you he wasn't at all easy to find.

In a way I was lucky, because I always had two fathers. I had a father who *was* there – I called him Douglas – and one who wasn't there, the one I'd never even met – the polar bear one. Yet in a way he was there. All the time I was growing up he was there

inside my head. But he wasn't only in my head, he was at the bottom of our Start-Rite shoebox, our secret treasure box, with the rubber bands round it, which I kept hidden at the bottom of the cupboard in our bedroom. So how, you might ask, does a polar bear fit into a shoebox? I'll tell you.

My big brother Terry first showed me the magazine under the bedclothes, by torchlight, in 1948 when I was five years old. The magazine was called *Theatre World*. I couldn't read it at the time, but he could. (He was two years older than me, and already mad about acting and the theatre and all that – he still is.) He had saved up all his pocket money to buy it. I thought he was crazy. 'A shilling! You can get about a hundred lemon sherbets for that down at the shop,' I told him.

Terry just ignored me and turned to page twenty-seven. He read it out: 'The Snow Queen, a dramat – something or other – of Hans Andersen's famous story, by the Young Vic company.' And there was a large black and white photograph right across the page – a photograph of two fierce-looking polar bears baring their teeth and about to eat two children, a boy and a girl, who looked very frightened.

'Look at the polar bears,' said Terry. 'You see that one on the left, the fatter one? That's our dad, our real dad. It says his name and everything – Peter Van





Diemen. But you're not to tell. Not Douglas, not even Mum, promise?'

'My dad's a polar bear?' I said. As you can imagine I was a little confused.

'Promise you won't tell,' he went on, 'or I'll give you a Chinese burn.'

Of course I wasn't going to tell, Chinese burn or no Chinese burn. I was hardly going to go to school the next day and tell everyone that I had a polar bear for a father, was I! And I certainly couldn't tell my mother, because I knew she never liked it if I ever asked about my real father. She always insisted that Douglas was the only father I had. I knew he wasn't, not really. So did she, so did Terry, so did Douglas. But for some reason that was always a complete mystery to me, everyone in the house pretended that he was.

Some background might be useful here. I was born, I later found out, when my father was a soldier in Baghdad during the Second World War. (You didn't know there were polar bears in Baghdad, did you?) Sometime after that my mother met and fell in love with a dashing young officer in the Royal Marines called Douglas Macleish. All this time, evacuated to the Lake District away from the bombs, blissfully unaware of the war and Douglas, I was learning to walk and talk and do my business in the right place at the right time.

So my father came home from the war to discover that his place in my mother's heart had been taken. He did all he could to win her back. He took her away on a week's cycling holiday in Suffolk to see if he could rekindle the light of their love. But it was hopeless. By the end of the week they had come to an amicable arrangement. My father would simply disappear, because he didn't want to 'get in the way'. They would get divorced quickly and quietly, so that Terry and I could be brought up as a new family with Douglas as our father. Douglas would adopt us and give us Macleish as our surname. All my father insisted upon was that Terry and I should keep Van Diemen as our middle name. That's what happened. They divorced. My father disappeared, and at the age of three I became Andrew Van Diemen Macleish. It was a mouthful then and it's a mouthful now.

So Terry and I had no actual memories of our father whatsoever. I do have vague recollections of standing on a railway bridge somewhere near Earl's Court in London, where we lived, with Douglas' sister – Aunt Betty, as I came to know her – telling us that we had a brand new father who'd be looking after us from now on. I was really not that concerned, not at the time. I was much more interested in the train that was chuffing along under the bridge, wreathing us in a fog of smoke.





My first father, my real father, my missing father, became a taboo person, a big hush hush taboo person that no one ever mentioned, except for Terry and me. For us he soon became a sort of secret phantom father. We used to whisper about him under the blankets at night. Terry would sometimes go snooping in my mother's desk and he'd find things out about him. 'He's an actor,' Terry told me one night. 'Our dad's an actor, just like Mum is, just like I'm going to be.'

It was only a couple of weeks later that he brought the theatre magazine home. After that we'd take it out again and look at our polar bear father. It took some time, I remember, before the truth of it dawned on me – I don't think Terry can have explained it very well. If he had, I'd have understood it much sooner – I'm sure I would. The truth, of course – as I think you might have guessed by now – was that my father was both an actor *and* a polar bear at one and the same time.

Douglas went out to work a lot and when he was home he was a bit silent, so we didn't really get to know him. But we did get to know Aunty Betty. Aunty Betty simply adored us, and she loved giving us treats. She wanted to take us on a special Christmas treat, she said. Would we like to go to the zoo? Would we like to go to

the pantomime? There was *Dick Whittington* or *Puss in Boots*. We could choose whatever we liked.

Quick as a flash, Terry said, '*The Snow Queen*. We want to go to *The Snow Queen*'.

So there we were a few days later, Christmas Eve 1948, sitting in the stalls at a matinee performance of *The Snow Queen* at the Young Vic theatre, waiting, waiting for the moment when the polar bears came on. We didn't have to wait for long. Terry nudged me and pointed, but I knew already which polar bear my father had to be. He was the best one, the snarliest one, the growliest one, the scariest one. Whenever he came on he really looked as if he was going to eat someone, anyone. He looked mean and hungry and savage, just the way a polar bear should look.

I have no idea whatsoever what happened in *The Snow Queen*. I just could not take my eyes off my polar bear father's curling claws, his slavering tongue, his killer eyes. My father was without doubt the finest polar bear actor the world had ever seen. When the great red curtains closed at the end and opened again for the actors to take their bows, I clapped so hard that my hands hurt. Three more curtain calls and the curtains stayed closed. The safety curtain came down and my father was cut off from me, gone, gone for ever. I'd never see him again.







Terry had other ideas. Everyone was getting up, but Terry stayed sitting. He was staring at the safety curtain as if in some kind of trance. 'I want to meet the polar bears,' he said quietly.

Aunty Betty laughed. 'They're not bears, dear, they're actors, just actors, people acting. And you can't meet them, it's not allowed.'

'I want to meet the polar bears,' Terry repeated. So did I, of course, so I joined in. 'Please, Aunty Betty,' I pleaded. 'Please.'

'Don't be silly. You two, you do get some silly notions sometimes. Have a Choc Ice instead. Get your coats on now.' So we each got a Choc Ice. But that wasn't the end of it.

We were in the foyer caught in the crush of the crowd when Aunty Betty suddenly noticed that Terry was missing. She went loopy. Aunty Betty always wore a fox stole, heads still attached, round her shoulders. Those poor old foxes looked every bit as pop-eyed and frantic as she did, as she plunged through the crowd, dragging me along behind her and calling for Terry.

Gradually the theatre emptied. Still no Terry. There was quite a to-do, I can tell you. Policemen were called in off the street. All the programme sellers joined in the search, everyone did. Of course, I'd worked it out. I knew exactly where Terry had gone, and what he was

up to. By now Aunty Betty was sitting down in the foyer and sobbing her heart out. Then, cool as a cucumber, Terry appeared from nowhere, just wandered into the foyer. Aunty Betty crushed him to her, in a great hug. Then she went loopy all over again, telling him what a naughty, naughty boy he was, going off like that. 'Where were you? Where have you been?' she cried.

'Yes, young man,' said one of the policemen. 'That's something we'd all like to know as well.'

I remember to this day exactly what Terry said, the very words: 'Jimmy riddle. I just went for a jimmy riddle.' For just a moment he even had me believing him. What an actor! Brilliant.

We were on the bus home, right at the front on the top deck where you can guide the bus round corners all by yourself – all you have to do is steer hard on the white bar in front of you. Aunty Betty was sitting a couple of rows behind us. Terry made quite sure she wasn't looking. Then, very surreptitiously, he took something out from under his coat and showed me. The programme. Signed right across it were these words, which Terry read out to me:

*'To Terry and Andrew,*
*With love from your polar bear father, Peter. Keep happy.'*





Night after night I asked Terry about him, and night after night under the blankets he'd tell me the story again, about how he'd gone into the dressing-room and found our father sitting there in his polar bear costume with his head off (if you know what I mean), all hot and sweaty. Terry said he had a very round, very smiley face, and that he laughed just like a bear would laugh, a sort of deep bellow of a laugh – when he'd got over the surprise that is. Terry described him as looking like 'a giant pixie in a bearskin'.

For ever afterwards I always held it against Terry that he never took me with him that day down to the dressing-room to meet my polar bear father. I was so envious. Terry had a memory of him now, a real memory. And I didn't. All I had were a few words and a signature on a theatre programme from someone I'd never even met, someone who to me was part polar bear, part actor, part pixie – not at all easy to picture in my head as I grew up.

Picture another Christmas Eve fourteen years later. Upstairs, still at the bottom of my cupboard, my polar bear father in the magazine in the Start-Rite shoebox; and with him all our accumulated childhood treasures: the signed programme, a battered champion conker (a sixty-fiver!), six silver ball-bearings, four greenish silver threepenny bits (Christmas pudding treasure trove), a

Red Devil throat pastille tin with three of my milk teeth cushioned in yellowy cotton wool, and my collection of twenty-seven cowrie shells gleaned over many summers from the beach on Samson in the Scilly Isles. Downstairs, the whole family were gathered in the sitting-room: my mother, Douglas, Terry and my two sisters (half-sisters really, but of course no one ever called them that), Aunty Betty, now married, with twin daughters, my cousins, who were truly awful – I promise you. We were decorating the tree, or rather the twins were fighting over every single dingly-dangly glitter ball, every strand of tinsel. I was trying to fix up the Christmas tree lights which, of course, wouldn't work – again – whilst Aunty Betty was doing her best to avert a war by bribing the dreadful cousins away from the tree with a Mars bar each. It took a while, but in the end she got both of them up on to her lap, and soon they were stuffing themselves contentedly with Mars bars. Blessed peace.

This was the very first Christmas we had had the television. Given half a chance we'd have had it on all the time. But, wisely enough I suppose, Douglas had rationed us to just one programme a day over Christmas. He didn't want the Christmas celebrations interfered with by 'that thing in the corner', as he called it. By common consent, we had chosen the Christmas Eve film on the BBC at five o'clock.









Five o'clock was a very long time coming that day, and when at last Douglas got up and turned on the television, it seemed to take for ever to warm up. Then, there it was on the screen: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. The half-mended lights were at once discarded, the decorating abandoned, as we all settled down to watch in rapt anticipation. Maybe you know the moment: Young Pip is making his way through the graveyard at dusk, mist swirling around him, an owl screeching, gravestones rearing out of the gloom, branches like ghoulish fingers whipping at him as he passes, reaching out to snatch him. He moves through the graveyard timorously, tentatively, like a frightened fawn. Every snap of a twig, every barking fox, every aarking heron sends shivers into our very souls.

Suddenly, a face! A hideous face, a monstrous face, looms up from behind a gravestone. Magwitch, the escaped convict, ancient, craggy and crooked, with long white hair and a straggly beard. A wild man with wild eyes, the eyes of a wolf.

The cousins screamed in unison, long and loud, which broke the tension for all of us and made us laugh. All except my mother.

'Oh my God,' she breathed, grasping my arm. 'That's your father! It's him. It's Peter.'

All the years of pretence, the whole long conspiracy

of silence were undone in that one moment. The drama on the television paled into sudden insignificance. The hush in the room was palpable.

Douglas coughed. 'I think I'll fetch some more logs,' he said. And my two half sisters went out with him, in solidarity I think. So did Aunty Betty and the twins; and that left my mother, Terry and me alone together.

I could not take my eyes off the screen. After a while I said to Terry, 'He doesn't look much like a pixie to me.'

'Doesn't look much like a polar bear either,' Terry replied. At Magwitch's every appearance I tried to see through his make-up (I just hoped it *was* make-up!) to discover how my father really looked. It was impossible. My polar bear father, my pixie father had become my convict father.

Until the credits came up at the end my mother never said a word. Then all she said was, 'Well, the potatoes won't peel themselves, and I've got the brussel sprouts to do as well.' Christmas was a very subdued affair that year, I can tell you.

They say you can't put a genie back in the bottle. Not true. No on in the family ever spoke of the incident afterwards – except Terry and me of course. Everyone behaved as if it had never happened. Enough was enough. Terry and I decided it was time to broach





the whole forbidden subject with our mother, in private. We waited until the furore of Christmas was over, and caught her alone in the kitchen one evening. We asked her point black to tell us about him, our 'first' father, our 'missing' father.

'I don't want to talk about him,' she said. She wouldn't even look at us. 'All I know is that he lives somewhere in Canada now. It was another life. I was another person then. It's not important.' We tried to press her, but that was all she would tell us.

Soon after this I became very busy with my own life, and for some years I thought very little about my convict father, my polar bear father. By the time I was thirty I was married with two sons, and was a teacher trying to become a writer, something I had never dreamt I could be.

Terry had become an actor, something he had always been quite sure he would be. He rang me very late one night in a high state of excitement. 'You'll never guess,' he said. 'He's here! Peter! Our dad. He's here, in England. He's playing in *Henry IV, Part II* in Chichester. I've just read a rave review. He's Falstaff. Why don't we go down there and give him the surprise of his life?'

So we did. The next weekend we went down to Chichester together. I took my family with me. I wanted them to be there for this. He was a wonderful

Falstaff, big and boomy, rumbustuous and raunchy, yet full of pathos. My two boys (ten and eight) kept whispering at me every time he came on. 'Is that him? Is that him?' Afterwards we went round to see him in his dressing-room. Terry said I should go in first, and on my own. 'I had my turn a long time ago, if you remember,' he said. 'Best if he sees just one of us to start with, I reckon.'

My heart was in my mouth. I had to take a very deep breath before I knocked on that door. 'Enter.' He sounded still jovial, still Falstaffian. I went in.

He was sitting at his dressing-table in his vest and braces, boots and britches, and humming to himself as he rubbed off his make-up. We looked at each other in the mirror. He stopped humming, and swivelled round to face me. For some moments I just stood there looking at him. Then I said, 'Were you a polar bear once, a long time ago in London?'

'Yes.'

'And were you once the convict in *Great Expectations* on the television?'

'Yes.'

'Then I think I'm your son,' I told him.

There was a lot of hugging in his dressing-room that night, not enough to make up for all those missing years, maybe. But it was a start.





My mother's dead now, bless her heart, but I still have two fathers. I get on well enough with Douglas, I always have done in a detached sort of way. He's done his best by me, I know that; but in all the years I've known him he's never once mentioned my other father. It doesn't matter now. It's history best left crusted over I think.

We see my polar bear father – I still think of him as that – every year or so, whenever he's over from Canada. He's well past eighty now, still acting for six months of every year – a real trouper. My children and my grandchildren always call him Grandpa Bear because of his great bushy beard (the same one he grew for Falstaff!), and because they all know the story of their grandfather, I suppose.

Recently I wrote a story about a polar bear. I can't imagine why. He's upstairs now reading it to my smallest granddaughter. I can hear him a-snarling and a-growling just as proper polar bears to. Takes him back, I should think. Takes me back, that's for sure.

Sample Text 8

# Journal entry by Year 6 pupil – introduction of the characters, Kensuke and Roxanne

The character Kensuke appears so suddenly to the narrator that it is a real surprise and we know, as readers, that he will be an important character. However the character of Roxanne does not make a dramatic appearance; she is just there as if she is in the background all the time, and not very important.

The author lets us know straight away what Kensuke's feelings are by his use of the words 'agitated, trembling, angry, shaking with fury', which have the effect of making us feel quite nervous, wondering whether he will attack Michael. Although we are told that Roxanne's grandfather neglects her and beats her, we are not given any clues about how she feels about him and the way he treats her, adding to the sense of mystery around her.

Kensuke immediately begins shouting, trying to communicate with Michael even though he doesn't speak the same language. We know that he has something very important to say to Michael because of the way he repeats it over and over, and we can imagine how frightening it must be to have someone shouting a foreign language at you. Roxanne does not speak at all when she is first introduced in the story, which again makes her rather mysterious. In fact we begin to wonder why she is always on her own, and whether perhaps she is unable to speak.

Sample Text 9

# Journal entry – thoughts about *Kensuke's Kingdom* and questions to ask Michael Morpurgo

Favourite part – when Kensuke and Michael rescue the orang-utans.
I wonder if someone could really survive that long.
Kensuke's Kingdom
I wanted Kensuke to go back to Japan to look for his family.
Michael Morpurgo
Why is the narrator called Michael like you?
Did you visit any tropical islands so you could make it realistic?
How did you get the idea of someone living on an island for so long?

Resource Sheet E

# Checklist for effective narrative writing

1 Opening/introducing characters
2 Build-up/characterisation or setting
3 Dilemma
4 Reaction/events
5 Resolution/ending

## 1. Opening/introducing characters

**Some possible options for opening a story 'to grab the reader':**

- Using dialogue, e.g. a warning given by one character to another
- Asking the reader a question
- Describing some strange behaviour of one of the characters
- Using a dramatic exclamation (Help!) or dramatic event
- Introducing something intriguing

**Techniques for introducing characters**

- Using an interesting name
- Limiting description on how the character feels, e.g. *sad, lonely, angry* or what they are, e.g. *bossy, shy*
- Relying on portraying character through action and dialogue
- Using powerful verbs to show how a character feels and behaves, e.g. *muttered, ambled*
- Giving the thoughts and reactions of other characters
- Revealing the characters' own thoughts and ideas

## 2. Build-up/creating setting

- Making the characters do something
- Using detail based on sense impressions – what can be seen, heard, smelled touched or tasted
- Basing settings on known places, plus some invented detail
- Using real or invented names to bring places alive – to help to make the setting more real and more believable
- Creating atmosphere, e.g. what is hidden, what is dangerous, what looks unusual, what is out of place
- Using the weather, time of day and season as well as place
- Lulling the reader into a false sense of security that all is well

## 3. Dilemma

- Introducing a problem
- Using 'empty' words, e.g. *someone* to create suspense
- Using short sentences to be dramatic
- Strengthening nouns and verbs rather than using adjectives and adverbs
- Employing suspense words such as *suddenly, without warning*

- Drawing the reader in by asking a question
- Occasionally breaking the sentence rule by using a fragment to emphasise a point, e.g. *Silence.*
- Varying sentence openings by sometimes starting with:
  - an adverb, e.g. *Carefully;*
  - a prepositional phrase, e.g. *At the end of the street;*
  - a subordinate clause, e.g. *Although she was tired, Vanya ... Swinging his stick in the air, he ...*

## 4. Reaction/events

- Building on many of the techniques already used in the earlier part of the story
- Varying sentence structure by using longer sentences to get a rhythm going to describe the increasing tension as events unfold
- Using alliteration and short sentences to portray sounds within the action
- Using metaphor and simile to help paint the scene and describe the feelings of the characters
- Introducing further complications using connecting words and phrases such as *unfortunately ...* and *what he hadn't noticed was ...*

## 5. Resolution and ending

**Techniques for resolving the dilemma**

- Allowing help to arrive in an unexpected form, e.g. *It was at that moment that ...*
- Making the character(s) do something unexpected
- Showing that the problem/dilemma was only in the characters' minds and not real
- Allowing the character some extra effort to overcome the problem
- Only resolving a part of the dilemma so the characters learn a lesson for the future

**Possible options for closing a story**

- Making a comment about the resolution
- Using dialogue – a comment from one of the characters
- Using a question
- Making a mysterious remark
- Telling the reader to remember or do something
- Showing how a character has changed
- Using one word or an exclamation
- Avoiding clichés such as *The end* or *They all lived happily ever after* unless it is a fabrication of a traditional story
- Reflecting on the events and perhaps providing a moral
- Allowing the main character to think aloud
- Introducing an element of mystery, e.g. *Vanya would never know how lucky she was that ...*
- Looking to the future
- Revisiting where the story began

Resource Sheet F

# Timeline showing Andrew's growing knowledge about his real father

| Before Andrew can remember (p. 31) | As a young child (pp. 30 and 34) | As a teenager (p. 37) | As an adult (p. 41) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Andrew born during World War 2. | Terry finds and buys a theatre programme which shows their real father.<br><br>Brothers see their father as a polar bear in *The Snow Queen*. Terry meets him. | Brothers see their father as a convict in film *Great Expectations* on TV. | Brothers see their father as Falstaff in *Henry IV*. Andrew meets him. |
| 1943 onwards | 1948 | 1962 | 1973 approx. |

# Annotated extract from 'My Father is a Polar Bear'

PAGE 34

So there we were a few days later, Christmas Eve 1948, sitting in the stalls at a matinee performance of *The Snow Queen* at the Young Vic theatre, waiting, waiting for the moment when the polar bears come on. We didn't have to wait for long. Terry nudged me and pointed, but I knew already which polar bear my father had to be. He was the best one, the snarliest one, the growliest one, the scariest one. Whenever he came on he really looked as if he was going to eat someone, anyone. He looked mean and hungry and savage, just the way a polar bear should look.

I have no idea whatsoever what happened in *The Snow Queen*. I just could not take my eyes off my polar bear father's curling claws, his slavering tongue, his killer eyes. My father was without doubt the finest polar bear actor the world had ever seen. When the great red curtains closed at the end and opened again for the actors to take their bows, I clapped so hard that my hands hurt. Three more curtain calls and the curtains stayed closed. The safety curtain came down and my father was cut off from me, gone, gone for ever. I'd never see him again....

Deliberate choice of vocabulary and sentence construction in this paragraph to suggest the way a child might talk about the event

This form of the past tense helps the reader to imagine the events as they were happening

Suggests narrator/author's strong feelings of pride, even before he has seen the bear

Use of superlatives is suitably child-like language and focuses on the physical appearance of the bear, which is all Andrew can experience of his father

Informal language is convincingly like that of a five-year-old

Repeat of 'waiting' to show impatience of the boy

Choice of sophisticated adjectives is a signal that the narrator/author is now remembering the event as an adult might

Formal language, rather like an announcement, suggests the narrator/author still feels great pride in his father's acting

Curtailed sentence 'There were' not written — count down to the inevitable wrench from his father

Return to use of child-like language to emphasise the powerlessness he felt as a child

PAGE 36

We were on the bus home, right at the front on the top deck where you can guide the bus round corners all by yourself – all you have to do is steer hard on the white bar in front of you. Aunt Betty was sitting a couple of rows behind us. Terry made quite sure she wasn't looking. Then, very surreptitiously, he took something out from under his coat and showed me. The programme. Signed right across it were these words, which Terry read out to me:

*'To Terry and Andrew,*
*With love from your polar bear father, Peter. Keep happy'*

Second person, present tense and realistically child-like language create the impression for readers that we are there on the bus, being shown what to do by Andrew

Very short incomplete sentence to create dramatic impact

Use of colloquial 'couple' instead of 'two'

Contraction of 'was not' to maintain air of intimate conspiracy

Inversion of usual sentence construction is more literary, and adds to the atmosphere of drama and importance

# Demo-write of notes of a recount and a related narrative

Notes of recount About 5 – at school yet? Nagged Mum to be allowed to play with her doll – precious, old. Dropped it – head cracked – upset.

## Related narrative

That afternoon I was so bored. My big sister and my best friend next door were both at school, but I was at home, so it must have happened before I was five. I couldn't find anything to do, and I was lying on the floor, with my legs in the air, the way little kids do. Have you noticed the way they do that, little kids, when they're fed up? You see them in shops sometimes, and they've obviously had enough of shopping, so they lie down in the middle of Marks and Spencer's or whatever and wave their legs around or start rolling about, until their mum or dad gets cross and drags them off, looking all tight-lipped and stressed out. I don't know if my mum was stressed out that day, or just fed up with me moaning about having nothing to do, but then I didn't think much about what she was feeling. You don't, when you're little, you only think about yourself.

Anyway, I was lying on the floor, staring at a long crack in the ceiling and wondering how it got there and if the ceiling would fall down, when suddenly I noticed something I hadn't seen for a long, long time: my mum's old doll. She kept it on top of a cupboard because it was fragile. When she was young, there wasn't any plastic, and this doll's head was made of china. I can't remember what the body was made of, though I've seen dolls like it since, preserved in a glass case in a museum. My mum's doll could have ended up in a glass case in a museum.

She'd looked after this doll for years and years, because it had been a special present, very expensive, and she really loved it. Even though she'd grown up and moved house countless times, she'd still kept her favourite doll safe. All through the war, despite the air raids and the bombs that destroyed the house next to hers, this doll had survived intact. I began to ask her if I could play with it, and I went on and on, the way kids do, all whiney and pleading, until she gave in and took the doll down from the cupboard for me. "Now be careful," she said, "if you drop it, it will break."

A big hole. There's a big hole in my memory, because I can't remember anything about what I did, what game I played with the doll after she gave it to me. But I can remember how the game ended, and I wish I couldn't. The doll just slipped to the floor. I was only small, so it can't have fallen far, but it was that china head you see. China smashes very easily. It cracks, and sometimes a part of it will smash into hundreds of tiny pieces, so there's no hope of sticking it back together, not in a million years. And that's what happened: the doll's face cracked, an ugly jagged line spread right across her pretty face, and a big hole appeared in the back of her head. Whenever I think of it, my stomach turns to water and I feel sick, just like I did that afternoon.

Hinting at something intriguing

Preparing the reader for the climax of the story by mentioning something else that is cracked. Suggesting a disaster is waiting to happen

Invented detail added to known setting

Use of word 'safe' adds to tension

Another hint that the doll will not survive this time

Longer sentences to get a rhythm going as tension increases

Misleads readers into thinking the doll has broken

Return to style of spoken language, almost as if the narrator is trying to excuse themselves

Repeated phrase for emphasis

Conversational tone achieved through use of informal, everyday language. Ordinary, mundane events. Emphasis on normality of narrator's behaviour, creating a false sense of security in the reader

Narrative hook — unspoken phrase 'if only . . . ' is implied, adding to the reader's suspicion that something will happen to the doll

Only line of dialogue — therefore particularly significant

Simple sentence to add impact

Climax of story — use of 'And' to start the sentence contributes to the sense that this was inevitable

Sample text



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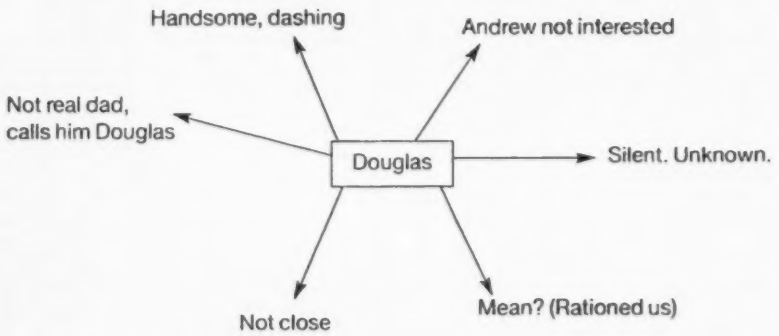
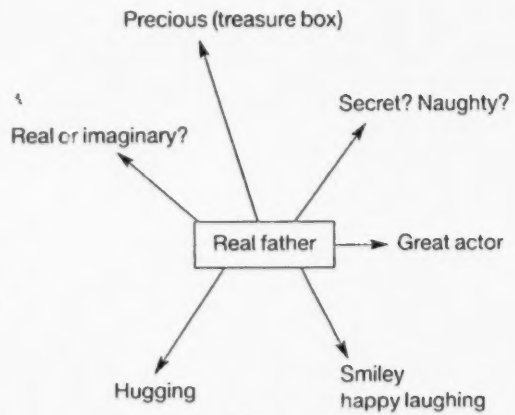
# Textual evidence in two different forms

| Page | Douglas | Page | Real father |
|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | "I called him Douglas" | 29 | " ... in a way he was there ... inside my head" |
| | | 30 | "he was at the bottom ... of our secret treasure box" |
| 31 | "a dashing young officer called Douglas" | | |
| 32 | "a brand new father ... I was really not that concerned" | | |
| 33 | "he was a bit silent, so we didn't really get to know him." | 33 | "My first father, my real father ... taboo person" |
| | | 34 | "My father was ... had ever seen." |
| | | 37 | "he had a very round, very smiley face, and ... he laughed ... " |
| 38 | "Douglas had rationed us ... " | | |
| 40 | "Douglas coughed ... " | | |
| | | 41-2 | "a wonderful Falstaff ..." |
| | | 42 | "There was a lot of hugging ... " |
| 43 | "I get on well enough with Douglas ... in a detached sort of way." | 43 | "He's upstairs now ... a-snarling and a-growling ... " |




RESOURCES

Resource Sheet (A)

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